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Navy and Marine Corps Medical News # 03-27 July 17, 2003

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A New Baby Is On the Way!

By Cpl. Nathaniel C. LeBlanc, Marine Corps Air Station  
Cherry Point

CHERRY POINT, N.C -- Having a baby is one of the most amazing and unforgettable experiences for any family. To help with such a special delivery the staff at Naval Hospital Cherry Point offers a freshly renovated Obstetrics and Gynecology (OB/GYN) clinic with family-centered care.

"I think patients will really enjoy the newly remodeled OB/GYN facility," said Cmdr. Debra Wilbert, Nurse Corps, OB/GYN nurse practitioner at the hospital. "We are very patient oriented in planning for their birth and we provide care every step of the way during the pregnancy."

Once a patient has a positive pregnancy test, the clinic prepares the expectant mother with classes and programs, and schedules all appointments. The hospital also provides reserved stork parking for those expectant mothers who are in their third trimester.

"We make all their appointments, so they don't have to deal with the hassle that is normally involved with the process," Wilbert said. "We personalize our service to make it more convenient for them rather than going through a 1-800 number."

Throughout the pregnancy, the clinic offers two ultrasound tests and provides periodic check-ups to ensure the pregnancy is going as expected.

"The clinic is very family driven and we also encourage the husbands to join the appointments," she added. "We want to try to make this time in their lives a family experience as much as possible."

Expectant mothers in labor are offered numerous services to make their child's birth comfortable and memorable. The labor department offers a large tub to relieve discomfort while in labor, flavored snow cones, and each room has a bathroom and shower.

"All the labor and post-birthing rooms are private to give a more personal experience for the patients," said Lt. Kendall Olvey, Medical Corps, a physician in OB/GYN. "They also have baby beds with the mom as long as the baby is doing well."

"We want the patients to really enjoy having their pregnancy here," Olvey said. "It's a really exciting time with all the improvements and we want the family to really benefit from our services."

The clinic will also implement food delivery service with menus for the expecting mothers.

"I was very impressed with the staff and their clinic," said Stefanie Sattely, new mother and a nurse from Craven Regional Medical Center. "It was an awesome experience and the staff gave me a lot of attention during my stay."

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NEHC Surveillance Allays TB Outbreaks  
By Capt Bruce K. Bohnker, Medical Corps, Navy  
Environmental Health Center Portsmouth Va.

PORTSMOUTH, Va. - The Navy Environmental Health Center (NEHC) in Portsmouth and the Navy Environmental and Preventive Medicine Units (NEPMU), located worldwide, are the Navy's front line defense against emerging infectious diseases. One of the diseases carefully monitored is tuberculosis, an ancient serious respiratory disease that has been on the upswing in the last several years.

The recently released Navy Medicine Annual Tuberculosis Report found that over 478,000 Sailors and Marines received tuberculosis skin testing in 2002, resulting in 5,002 positive tests.

A positive test means the individual was exposed and infected by the tuberculosis bacterium, but had not become ill with active TB. Medication got rid of the infection and prevented illness and any risk of the individual becoming infectious in the future. The conversion rate of 1.6 percent of all tested was down slightly from previous years.

According to Hospital Corpsman Second Class (SW) Collin Bowman of the NEHC surveillance epidemiology department, who did the statistical analysis said, "Aircraft carriers had the lowest rate, with only 0.75 percent having a positive skin test. The Marines had 1.1 percent positive, and large deck amphibious ships 1.6 percent. There were only 4 active cases of tuberculosis disease identified in the last year, well below the 20 active cases identified in 1998".

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The Navy's Exceptional Family Member Program  
Helps Families

By Marsha Childs, Naval Hospital Jacksonville

JACKSONVILLE, Fla.- For the Patterson family, the Exceptional Family Member Program (EFMP) reflects the Navy's concern and support for active duty families with chronic medical, psychological, or special educational needs.

Conner Patterson was diagnosed with severe asthma triggered by food allergens and cold weather shortly after his birth in July 2001. When Lt. Luke Patterson received verbal orders to Maine, he and his wife, Amanda, were very concerned for their youngest son's health.

Amanda said, "Being transferred several times, we weren't really anywhere long enough for Conner to be followed by one doctor. I needed to know that we were being put in one place for consistent care." Because of Conner's placement in the EFMP and his assigned category, the Patterson family was allowed to remain in the area to ensure treatment at Naval Hospital Jacksonville. Now almost two years later, Conner is thriving and has reduced many of his medications under the watchful eye of his pediatrician, Lt. Cmdr. Tammy Wind, Medical Corps.

The main purpose of the EFMP is to ensure that duty station assignments match the needs of the enrolled family member. Enrollment in the program is mandatory and must be done when special needs are identified, or at least nine months prior to the sponsor's projected rotation date. Some of the leading diagnoses that qualify family members for the program are learning and language delays, attention deficit disorder, asthma, developmental delays, seizures, affective psychoses, cerebral palsy or birth disorders, diabetes, heart condition, and depression.

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Reservist Heads Surgery at Halyburton

By Cpl. Nathaniel C. LeBlanc, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point

MARINE CORPS AIR STATION CHERRY POINT, N.C. - The steady hands of a skilled surgeon can be the life-saving factor of a severely wounded Marine in combat. When Navy surgeons are forward-deploy, Reservist surgeons are called to duty to take the helm at home.

Capt. Brady Way, Medical Corps, department head of general surgery at Halyburton Naval Hospital, was activated during Operation Enduring Freedom and has taken care of general surgery for the past year.

"I was activated right after they sent the Halyburton surgeons to Guantanamo Bay for the Al-Qaida prisoners," Way said. "After that, things kind of developed on from there and here I am a year later."

As the department head, Way supervises not only the department of surgery, but also the internal medicine department as well. The department consists of two other surgeons and two internal medicine doctors.

"Mainly I work with general surgery," Way said. "I deal with the same types of surgeries that I would normally deal with in my private practice."

The Beaufort, N.C., native left behind his medical practice in Morehead City, N.C., to answer the call of his country.

"It's something that Reservists have to deal with, which is difficult because you're leaving a practice or job behind," Way said. "But this is something we all knew we were getting into and signed up for."

For the 20-year Reservist, Way is familiar with the call to duty after being activated during Operation Desert Storm.

"Being activated definitely affects life situations," Way said. "It's quite a sacrifice for a Reservist to drop everything and serve. I give hats off to them, particularly for those who are forward deployed."

During Way's time at the Halyburton Naval Hospital, the department has made strides in improvements.

"We've improved many things as a department with the addition of increased productivity and an increase in revised financing," Way said. "I'm proud of the clinic. All the surgeons, division officers, and corpsmen really improved this department tremendously in the past year".

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Healthwatch: Hereditary Hemochromatosis --

Iron Overload

By Aveline V. Allen, Bureau of Medicine & Surgery

WASHINGTON - Do you get enough iron in your diet, or are you getting too much? If you have too much iron in your body, it could be a sign of hereditary hemochromatosis (HH), or hereditary iron overload.

According to the American Hemochromatosis Society (AHS), this is a common genetic disease. AHS medical experts report that HH is a significant contributing factor to heart disease, liver disease, cancer, arthritis, diabetes, and in some cases, even premature and avoidable deaths.

"Because the early manifestations of HH are so vague, this is one of the most common undiagnosed medical disorders," said Cmdr. Christopher Culp, Medical Corps, Navy Medicine specialty leader for internal medicine. "This is unfortunate as it is completely treatable."

In an effort to treat this disease and ensure you are receiving adequate amounts of iron, medical

screening should be done to determine if you are at risk for HH. If diagnosed with HH, AHS medical experts recommend not taking iron or vitamin C supplements, or consuming raw seafood or shellfish.

"Anyone with a first-degree relative who has been diagnosed with HH should be screened," added Culp.

AHS recommends healthcare providers screen individuals over 18 years old to determine present iron storage level. It is also recommended that children between the ages of two and 18 years old have an iron profile every two to three years, if they have a relative who has been diagnosed with HH.

There are several tests that can be done to determine if a person has HH. Some of these tests include DNA analysis, liver function tests, liver biopsy, and glucose and hepatitis screenings.

If HH is diagnosed, your doctor will ensure proper medical treatment is administered for your symptoms. This will vary from person to person. According to the AHS, an individual with HH should have their storage iron level brought to 20 ng/ml.

Further information on this disease can be found at [www.americanhs.org](http://www.americanhs.org).

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